

Message Text

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43

ACTION OPR-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 MED-03 A-01 OES-05 /024 W

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R 281126Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7714

UNCLAS ANKARA 0784

FOR HUNT (A/O), NYDELL (DG/MED), AND STROMASER (AJ/ALS)
FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGSJC APER, AMED, ALOW, TU

SUBJ: ANKARA AIR CONTAMINATION

1. EMBASSY IS FORWARDING A-11 OF JANUARY 23, 1975 GIVING
DETAILED DATA ON ANKARA AIR CONTAMINATION SITUATION GATHERED
FROM BEST AVAILABLE LOCAL SCIENTIFIC SOURCES.

2. DATA INDICATE THAT TWO MAJOR SOURCES OF CONTAMINATION
ARE (A) PARTICULATES (SMOKE FROM LIGNITE COAL AND LOW GRADE
HEATING FUEL); AND (B) SULFUR DIOXIDE (SO-2).

3. IT IS PARTICULATES THAT MOST DRAMATICALLY INDICATE TO THE
ORDINARY OBSERVER THAT ANKARA HAS AN AIR POLLUTION PROBLEM.
PARTICULATES ENVELOP CITY IN UGLY BLACK CLOUD, DRASTICALLY
REDUCE VISIBILITY, SHUT OUT SUNLIGHT, SOIL CLOTHING IN MATTER OF
HOURS, ETC. PARTICULATES CREATE ERRONEOUS (AS SHALL BE SEEN)
IMPRESSION THAT ANKARA'S AIR CONTAMINATION IS SIMPLY A "SMOG
PROBLEM." LEVEL OF PARTICULATES IN ANKARA AIR IS DANGEROUSLY HIGH.
WHO STANDARDS SET '75 MICROGRAMS PER CUBIC METER AS
PERMISSIBLE MINIMUM FOR PARTICULATES. ANKARA ANNUAL
AVERAGE RPT AVERAGE FOR PARTICULATES IS 113.76 MICROGRAMS
PER SQUARE CUBIC METER. THIS DESPITE THE FACT THAT FOR
SEVEN WARM MONTHS OF THE YEAR PARTICULATE LEVEL IS BELOW
WHO PERMISSIBLE MINIMUM. DURING REMAINING FIVE MONTHS
(NOVEMBER THROUGH MARCH) MONTHLY AVERAGES RISE TO LEVELS
THREE TIMES HIGHER THAN PERMISSIBLE MINIMUM.

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4. PARTICULATES ARE BAD ENOUGH BUT REAL VILLAIN OF THE PIECE IS SULFUR DIOXIDE GAS. WHO PERMISSIBLE MINIMUM IS 150 MICROGRAMS PER CUBIC METER. ANKARA ANNUAL AVERAGE IS 227.95 MICROGRAMS PER CUBIC METER, AGAIN DESIITE FACT THAT FOR SIX WARM MONTHS OF YEAR SO-2 CONCENTRATIONS ARE WELL BELOW PERMISSIBLE MINIMUM. FROM NOVEMBER THROUGH MARCH SO-2 CONCENTRATIONS ARE AT LEAST TWICE PERMISSIBLE MINIMUM. IN JANUARY THESE CONCENTRATIONS RISE TO FOUR TIMES PERMISSIBLE MINIMUM. EFFECTS OF EXCESS OF SO-2 ON EYES AND LUNGS ARE WELL KNOWN TO MEDICAL PROFESSION AND THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT THERE IS EFFECT ON HEART AS WELL.

AS DEPARTMENT AWARE THERE IS ALSO POTENTIAL CARCENOGENIC FACTOR AND THERE HAVE BEEN ALLEGATIONS THAT LUNG CANCER INCIDENCE IN ANKARA AREA IS 25 PERCENT HIGHER THAN NATIONAL

AVERAGE.

5. EVEN ON RARE CLEAR WINTER DAYS HERE WHEN WINDS HAVE LARGELY DISPERSED PARTICULATES, SO-2 IS ALWAYS WITH US IN UNACCEPTABLE QUANTITIES. AIRGRAN UNDER REFERENCE CONTAINS PIECE OF CLEAR EVIDENCE OF SO-2 PRESENCE IN ANKARA: PHOTOGRAPH OF SILVER DISH AND PAPER WEIGHT FROM MY OFFICE WHICH TARNISHED OVER COMPLETELY ONLY FOUR DAYS AFTER THEY HAD BEEN THOROUGHLY CLEANED AND POLISHED.

6. A NOTABLE FACT CONCERNING HIGH SO-2 CONCENTRATIONS IS THAT THERE IS NO KNOWN DEFENSE AGAINST THEM. ELECTRONIC PRECIPITATORS HAVE PROVEN TO BE OF SOME USE AGAINST PARTICULATES IN ANKARA ATMOSPHERE. THEY ARE OF LITTLE USE, HOWEVER, AGAINST CONTAMINATING GASES SUCH AS SO-2.

7. FURTHER DISCOURAGING ELEMENT IS PROBLEM IS THAT THERE IS NO PROSPECT THAT SITUATION AILL IMPROVE IN NEAR FUTURE. INSTANT CONVERSION OF ANKARA AREA TO LOW-SULFUR OIL AS

BASIC FUEL IS NEITHER ECONOMICALLY NOR PRACTICALLY FEASIBLE. THERE IS MUCH TALK ABOUT SCHEMES TO UPGRADE LOCAL LIGNITE UNCLASSIFIED

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EITHER BY COKING PROCESS OR BY WASHING BUT THIS, TOO, IS APPARENTLY MANY YEARS OVER THE HORIZON. MACOMBER

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